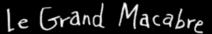




# Le Grand Macabre

by György Ligeti

New York Philharmonic New York Premiere May 27–29, 2010



#### by György Ligeti

Opera in four acts

to a libretto by Michael Meschke and György Ligeti, freely adapted from Michel de Ghelderode's play La Balade du Grand Macabre

> New York Philharmonic New York Premiere May 27–29, 2010

Conductor ALAN GILBERT

Director & Designer DOUG FITCH

Producer EDOUARD GETAZ

Production created by GIANTS ARE SMALL

Costume Designer CATHERINE ZUBER\*

Lighting Designer CLIFTON TAYLOR\*

Barbara Hannigan, soprano\* GEPOPO

Kiera Duffy, soprano VENUS

Jennifer Black, soprano\* AMANDA

Renée Tatum, mezzo-soprano AMANDO

Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor\* PRINCE GO-GO

Melissa Parks, mezzo-sopranao\* MESCALINA

Mark Schowalter, tenor\* PIET THE POT

Eric Owens, bass-baritone NEKROTZAR

Wilbur Pauley, bass ASTRADAMORS

Peter Tantsits, tenor THE WHITE MINISTER

Joshua Bloom, baritone\* THE BLACK MINISTER

Rob Besserer\* ATMOSPHERICIST

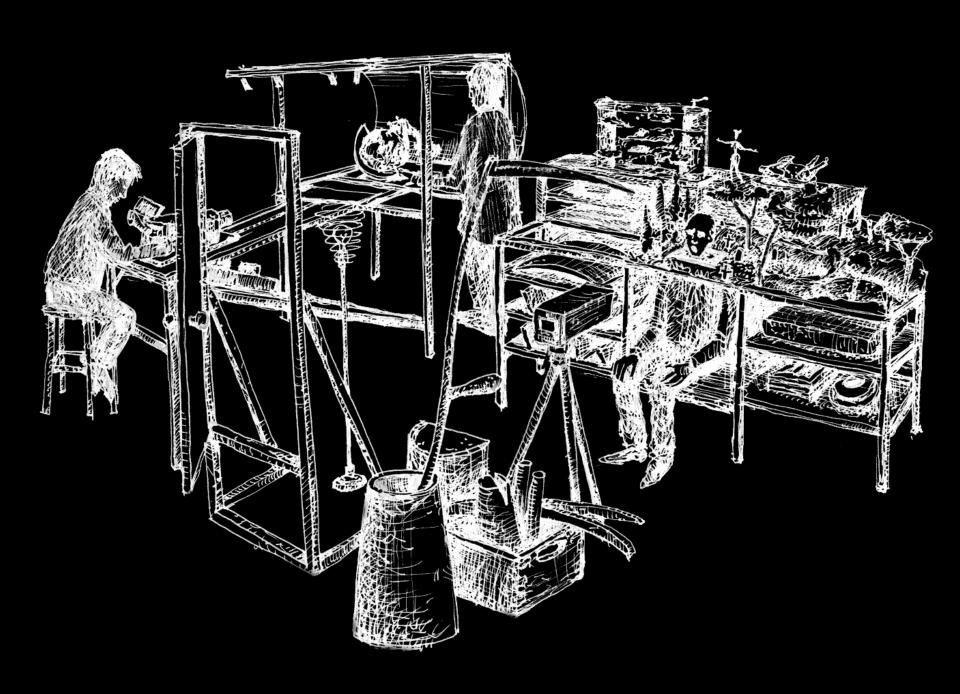
Dennis Blackwell\* RUFFIACK

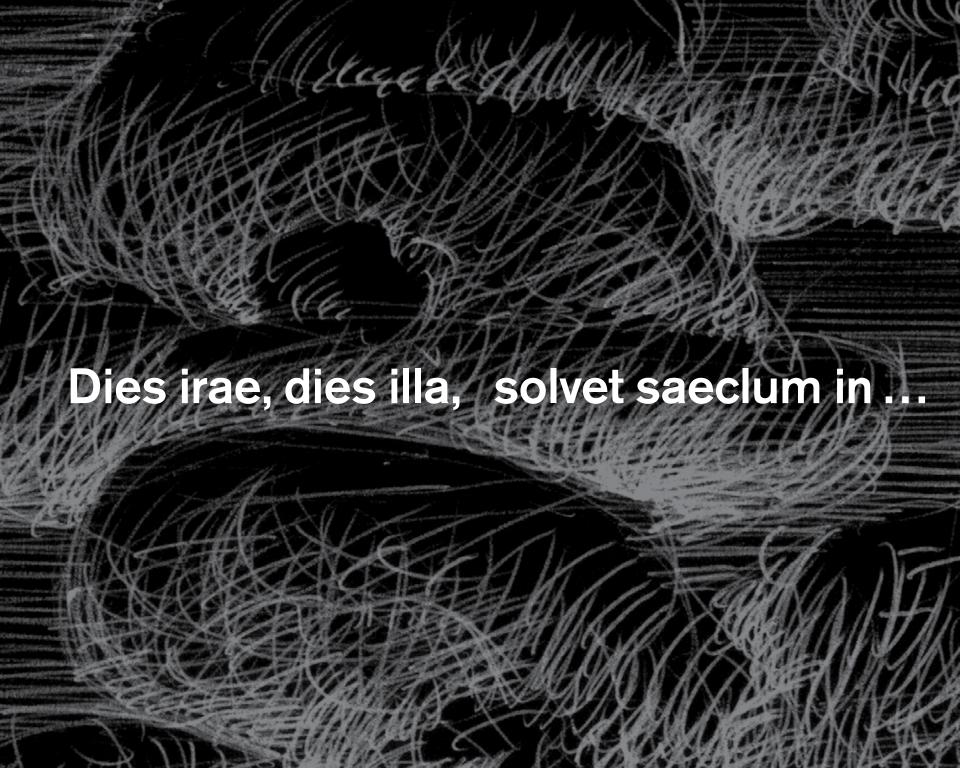
Michael Riley SCHOBIACK

Steven Moore\* SCHABERNACK

New York Choral Artists CHORUS OF SPIRITS; Joseph Flummerfelt, director WHISPERING WALLS;

PEOPLE OF BREUGHELLAND







Ha! Blissful!? Have mercy, Your Skinniness! PIET Have mercy, Your Ugliness! With sweetest lust, see how my heart's full! AMANDA & AMANDO I have done you no wrong! Ha! I know what she's full of! Just had a bit too much to drink, PIET have now and then hallucinations, Lecherous worm! NEKROTZAR hear horrible music. Miserable scoundrel! That for the worm! Ah! Have mercy on Piet, AMANDO you mighty ... strikes Piet with his dagger ... friend! Mercy, lord! I spoke no word! PIET On Piet the Pot, It came from above, so who spoke? by trade wine-taster The Almighty! here in Breughella - la-la-la ... O, my dear darling! AMANDA & AMANDO Shut up! NEKROTZAR And rejoice to be still alive! AMANDO By this vile rogue we are disturb'd! O. how I ache! Oh, yes! PIET AMANDA AMANDO And I shall burst! NEKROTZAR Yet thou shalt perish! AMANDA & AMANDO Where is a place, a secret place, Oh, yes! PIET where our sighing will not be heard? Your belly burst open! NEKROTZAR They slowly leave the stage. PIET Oh, yes! Nekrotzar appears suddenly from the tomb. NEKROTZAR Your throat racked with thirst! NEKROTZAR Away, you swagpot! Amen! PIET Ah! PIET Wait! What is that you said? Racked with thirst? No! Lick the floor, you dog! NEKROTZAR You spoke of death, not punishment! Yes, sir! Miaow! PIET Hey, friend! You go too far! Squeak out your dying wish, you rogue! Hey! Look out! NEKROTZAR



NEKROTZAR Piet the Pot, your time runs out; so hear the bitter words of these my tidings:

that all, all men on earth, must perish!

PIET Any fool knows that!

NEKROTZAR But no one knows the hour.

Or do you know it?

NEKROTZAR Here tonight, as midnight strikes,

you will espy a pale horse, and on its back sits Death, and all hell follows behind!

So scream and howl and tremble!

For there will be blood, and fire will follow!
And nothing remain but dust and ash!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS off-stage during Nekrotzar's declamation

Destruction soon draws nigh, thou art in peril great, for death will be thy fate!

PIET But dust and a -

CHORUS OF SPIRITS Take warning now,

at midnight thou shalt die!

PIET Rot!

Tell me, with whom exactly have I the honor?

NEKROTZAR I bear the name of Nekrotzar.

PIET And where does its bearer come from?

NEKROTZAR points to the grave

From there!

Ha! I could make good use of you,

you are so ... well fed ... and yet still agile!

Go down that tomb!

Left, right, left, look smart!

Bring out the instruments there;
I need them – get a move on! –

for the bus'ness which I am doing night by night.

PIET Ugh! How it stinks down here!

AMANDA & AMANDO O ...!

The lovers appear, disheveled.

AMANDO Amanda!

Can do no more!

AMANDA Ach, my Amando!

Piet emerges out of the tomb with a scythe, a trumpet, and a cloak, and collides inadvertently with Amanda.

AMANDO Peeping prick-head, Stupid dick-head!

Spank your monkey, stupid flunky! Now's your chance, jiz your pants!

PIET Ow!

AMANDA rushes to the tomb

There! There! Amando. see!

AMANDA & AMANDO Here, here is free!

disappear quickly into the tomb

NEKROTZAR Ha ha ha ha!

Hey! Give me my requisites, slave!

Piet gives Nekrotzar scythe and trumpet and hangs a cloak over his shoulders.

Well? What d'you say to that?

Tell me, who am I?

PIET With a scythe?

With a trumpet?

Bells?

And that bony face?

Those hollow eyeball sockets?

Those grinning jaws? Now I'm in deep shit!

NEKROTZAR The will of the Almighty ...

PIET Oh, gruesome Lord Macabre!

NEKROTZAR ... whose executor I am ...

Oh, hear my pleading, my wailing, beseeching!

... sets me to work!

PIET Oh, please, sir, please,

spare the people of Breughelland!

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Oh, please, oh, please!

NEKROTZAR | mow them blind!

NEKROTZAR

PIET Let the children live still!

NEKROTZAR The good ones and the evil!

PIET Oh, Breughelland!

NEKROTZAR Arise, night of triumph!

On to the city!
A horse! A horse!

You! You shall be my horse!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS Destruction soon draws nigh,

thou art in peril great, for death will be thy fate! Take warning now,

at midnight thou shalt die!

NEKROTZAR mounts Piet, who serves as a horse, with difficulty

Make room! Room for the Great Macabre!

The end of time has come!

The world! The world will meet its doom!

Gee-up, horse!

Piet whinnies dreadfully loudly and trots with Nekrotzar, riding piggy-back, quickly offstage. The voices of Amanda and Amando come from the tomb.

AMANDO Melting snow is thy breast,

close entwined rest, oh rest!

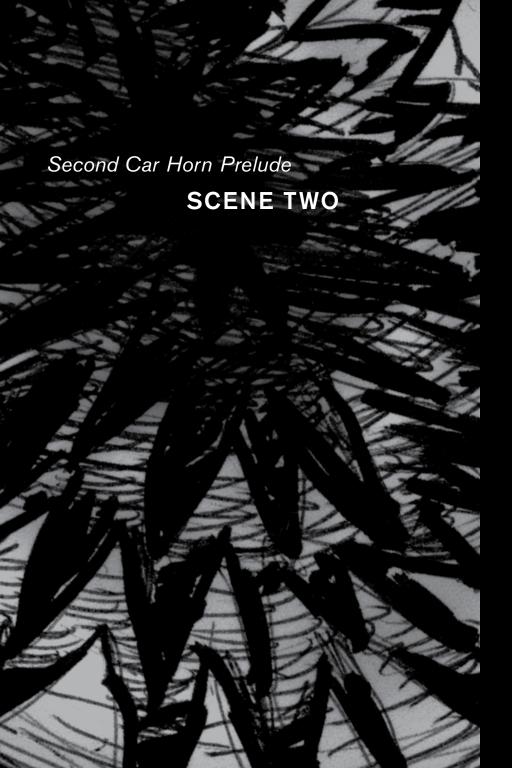
AMANDA Snow I was, yet now am flowing,

flower am I, brightly glowing.

AMANDA & AMANDO Fire flower, blossom rose-red,

loving and loved till we are dead.





In the house of the court astronomer.

Chaotic combination of laboratory and kitchen

MESCALINA One! Two! Three! Five!

a whiplash

ASTRADAMORS in women's clothes

Ow!

MESCALINA Hop, hop up!

ASTRADAMORS Ow! More!

MESCALINA Ha ha! All right!

ASTRADAMORS Ow!

MESCALINA Four! Six! Ten! Whoopsy!

ASTRADAMORS Ah!

MESCALINA Higher!

ASTRADAMORS Ouch!

MESCALINA Higher, I tell you!

ASTRADAMORS Ow! More!

MESCALINA Well, dolly, like it?

ASTRADAMORS Ow, lovely! Thank you!

MESCALINA And thanks to who?

ASTRADAMORS Ow! To my dearest adored one!

MESCALINA Is that all?

ASTRADAMORS My sweetheart! My dear heart!

My heart's sweetheart!
My sweetheart's heart!
Adoration's deepest chasm!
For today, please, please stop!

MESCALINA What? Stop?

She takes up a spit, which she waves around threateningly.

ASTRADAMORS No! No! Not the spit!

Not the spit!

MESCALINA Spit ... or kiss?

ASTRADAMORS Rather the spit!

Monsieur ... lift your skirt! MESCALINA

Ah! Eee! Aye! Oh! Oo! Eu! Eh! ASTRADAMORS

Mescalina takes a saucepan lid out of Astradamor's trousers.

And what is that? MESCALINA

ASTRADAMORS Prophylacticum est, Amen.

MESCALINA Upholstered, what?

What, upholstered?

Thus you try to escape your marital duties,

you swine, you!

Now I'll extinguish you, monsieur!

Blot you right out!

She deals him a karate blow. Astradamors falls silently like a sack on to the floor.

Dead? He has the nerve to die?

Oh, pain!

Who'll rinse dishes? Do the washing? Who the cooking? Who the mending? Who will do the cleaning?

Who the scrubbing, waxing?

Wiping, sweeping?

Who, who now will make the beds?

Who will darn the stockings? On top of that, this place is a mess!

Oh, my! Oh!

I wonder if he's really dead?

She entices a huge and hairy Black spider out of the corner.

Come, my precious, come, my hairy one, come, my itchy one, come, my venomous, show me your cross, go, give him your paw.



She holds the spider under Astradamors's nose.

**ASTRADAMORS** suddenly gets up

No! No!

Not the spider, no!

grabs Astradamors by the throat **MESCALINA** 

> Let it bite you till you swell! No? You shall eat it! Eat. come!

You won't?

Mercy, dear madam! Mercy! **ASTRADAMORS** 

Spiders always give me nausea!

Mescalina lets go of Astradamors and throws the spider away with a condescending gesture.

Oh, always your eternal imploring

and the ranting and the roaring is so boring!

Up, up! The gallopade! MESCALINA



Hopla, eunuch! MESCALINA

ASTRADAMORS Morbid Monday!

Hopla, hangjohn! MESCALINA

Tiresome Tuesday! ASTRADAMORS

Hopla, shithole! MESCALINA

ASTRADAMORS Weary Wednesday!

Hopla, fiddlebow! MESCALINA

Thankless Thursday! ASTRADAMORS

Hopla, pisspot! MESCALINA

Futile Friday! MESCALINA & ASTRADAMORS

Sterile Saturday!

Mescalina turns her backside toward Astradamors.

kisses Mescalina's backside ASTRADAMORS

Sweetest Sunday!

she dances MESCALINA

> Shapely and attractive figure, pleasant, warm and full of vigor, charming, pretty, kind of heart, graceful, tasteful, always smart! Come on! Wake up! It's morning!

Ay, ay, madam! ASTRADAMORS

MESCALINA March to the telescope!

ASTRADAMORS Ay, ay, madam!

MESCALINA Watch the stars at once! On the double!

ASTRADAMORS Ay, ay, madam!

Well, what can you see up there? MESCALINA

> By the way ... can you see the planets? Are they all still there, in the right order,

each in the proper place?

And Venus? Is she there?

drinks and soon becomes tipsy

Prosit, sister Venus!

You venereal creature!

Oh, my dreary nights, dark with bitterness!

Hear me, Venus?

How I do envy you!

Venus! Venus!

Give me just one lascivious night!

She drinks, falls over, and goes to sleep.

Oh my dreary nights, dark with bitterness! **ASTRADAMORS** 

I could strangle her!

Could choke her, could stab her, could crush her or throttle her,

brain her or drown her or knife her or hang her.

murder, slay her, kill, behead her, hang and slaughter, impale, butcher, poison her drink and destroy her!

Immolate, massacre, put -

Mescalina sighs in her sleep.

I didn't say anything, dear ...

I would plunge the whole world into damnation if only I could be assured it would get rid of her!

Nekrotzar enters vehemently, riding on Piet's back.

Stop! NEKROTZAR

Sh! ... ASTRADAMORS

> Quiet, for heaven's sake! My sweetheart's asleep!

to Piet NEKROTZAR

Mangy bastard!

To ... heel!

Friend Astradamors! It's you?

Friend Piet the Pot! It's you! **ASTRADAMORS** 

Mescalina is dreaming that the goddess Venus is visiting her. Venus appears as a vision, high up in the background.

MESCALINA as in her sleep

Hello! Put me on to Venus quickly, the bitch!

VENUS Here, I am she.

MESCALINA Just as I might have thought!

Hey, slut-muffin, topless, eh?

And who art thou?

MESCALINA	A disgracefully neglected woman!	VENUS & MESCALINA Oh, what	a grip!
VENUS	How so? Did I not give thee two men?	NEKROTZAR <b>With this</b>	strong grip
<b>经</b> 多数的			eze out thy breath!
MESCALINA	Men?	A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	
<b>西湖</b> 神	Ha ha! Don't make me laugh! Ha ha!	THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY O	out my breath! wess! What finesse!
VENUS	And what then hast thou done with these	The Parties of the Pa	
	two men?		of loving hurl me!
MESCALINA	Well, Little Miss Omniscient,		ugh me, plough through me, me, punch holes in me!
A PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF	made cuckolds out of them,		
	daily, hourly, quarter-hourly!  The pick of fellows were the ones I grabbed!	PIET & ASTRADAMORS Merciles:	s, what cleverness!
A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	The pick of fellows were the offes I graphed:	nekrotzar In a deep	pit cast thee down,
PIET, NEKROTZAR & ASTRADAMORS	Hm!		is pit, dark and profound,
		shall thy	voice forever be drowned!
MESCALINA	But no I must confess	Nekrotzar embraces Mescalina brutall	y and bites her throat.
	in recent times I've seen signs of being left on the shelf	PIET & ASTRADAMORS Pitiless t	he last caress!
		The same of the sa	
PIET, NEKROTZAR & ASTRADAMORS	Hm!	mescalina <b>Ach!!!</b>	· 阿里斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯斯
	Ca ulassa siya wa an anbuadisia	Mescalina suddenly wakes up, horrified.	She struggles violently. Venus disappears.
MESCALINA	So please give me an aphrodisiac, like rat poison,	A vampir	
THE REAL PROPERTY.	so strong and potent!	-established (77 M) (4 % M)	
(1) May 12	Or send me a man,	PIET & ASTRADAMORS I'm spee	chless!
	with bow legs and a hunchback if you like,	Mescalina falls like a heavy sack to the	e ground.
	as long as he's well hung!	nekrotzar Too late,	Megaera! You're poisoned!
VENUS	It shall be done!		F (A)
NEKROTZAR	Awake, woman!	mescalina <b>Murdere</b> i	456.03.5000
	The goddess declares thy wish fulfilled,	She appe	ears to be dying.
P 33 W	here am I, and am well hung!	PIET & ASTRADAMORS Quite life	eless!
PIET, NEKROTZAR	The state of the s	NEKROTZAR <b>You're fir</b>	nished!
& ASTRADAMORS	Ah?!	ACTRADAMORO Liberatur	s, liberata, liberatum sum, esse, fui!
MESCALINA	Who's there? A man?	astradamors <b>Liberatus</b>	s, liberata, liberatum sum, esse, iui:
		NEKROTZAR gives the	prostrate Mescalina a kick
NEKROTZAR	A man! Arise, Bacchante!	Move this	s thing out of the way!
Nekrotzar performs a violen	t love scene with Mescalina.	PIET to Astrad	amors
VENUS	It shall be done.	Give a ha	and!
NEKROTZAR	I'll still thy desire, and make love to thee!	Piet and Astradamors lift Mescalina by	her arms and legs – she is very heavy.
MESCALINA	Still my desire, make love to me!	astradamors Ex profu	ndo
PIET & ASTRADAMORS	So, yes! Give no redress!	PIET Quick, w	ith gusto!
	The state of the s		



ASTRADAMORS ... in profundum.

Piet and Astradamors let the body fall.

PIET Done!

ASTRADAMORS And punctum!

PIET hurries to the table and takes up Mescalina's

wineglass

Cheers!

NEKROTZAR Time's running out!

Where in hell's that damned comet?

ASTRADAMORS Haven't the faintest idea.

Nekrotzar gives the door a powerful shove and it opens. In the same instant, blinding light streams through the open door.

PIET & ASTRADAMORS There! There he is!

NEKROTZAR So I have won!

He brutally slams the door shut.

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ASTRADAMORS So you have won!

PIET takes a drink

So he has won ...

ASTRADAMORS | exult!

PIET | swallow!

NEKROTZAR Brigade! On your marks!

### **FINALE**

NEKROTZAR Fire and death I bring,

burning and shrivelling!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Awful our suffering!

NEKROTZAR Thunder and lightning flash!

Now comes the final crash!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS My mouth's as dry as ash!

NEKROTZAR Torches of hell-fire glow!

Blood in the streets shall flow!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Why do I tremble so?

NEKROTZAR My rage on all I vent,

bringing them punishment!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Death is so permanent!

NEKROTZAR Loud booming and roaring

shall to them my vengeance bring!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS That's the important thing!

NEKROTZAR, PIET & ASTRADAMORS

Thousands of men will die

hearing my battle cry!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS None can your vengeance fly!

NEKROTZAR Each one of you I catch,

cold-blooded I dispatch!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS None is for him a match!

NEKROTZAR, PIET

& ASTRADAMORS And from graves on all sides

one hears dull groans and cries!

PIET Ah, had I somewhere to hide?

NEKROTZAR Yes, I am but a loyal

and zealous destroyer!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Death is his employer!

NEKROTZAR My duty here is past

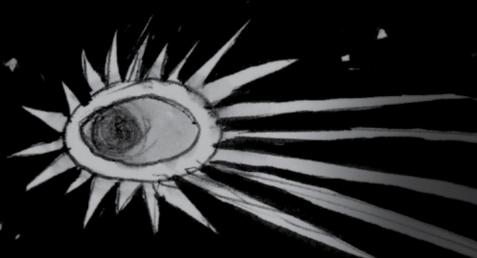
when all have breathed their last!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Soon we shall be angels!

NEKROTZAR All do now as I say:

when Death speaks, men obey!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Why must it be today?



NEKROTZAR blows the trumpet

What for me is but jest means for you death, fire, pest!

NEKROTZAR For no mortality's

proof against brutality!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS He'll show you no pity!

NEKROTZAR Earthquakes will soon arrive,

leave not a soul alive!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS No hope that I survive!

NEKROTZAR, PIET

& ASTRADAMORS Soon will a star ascend,

spare neither foe nor friend,

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Then we shall meet our end!

NEKROTZAR, PIET

& ASTRADAMORS Ye shall be cast in

death everlasting!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Naught left but darkness!

NEKROTZAR I am all powerful!

'Neath me ve shall cower!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Death the devourer!

NEKROTZAR I am the slayer,

Satan's purveyor!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Oh, hear our prayer!

NEKROTZAR With pillage and plunder

the world split asunder!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS So dreadful a wonder!

NEKROTZAR The earth's crust I shall smash,

leaving just smoke and ash!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Our final hope to dash!

NEKROTZAR, PIET

& ASTRADAMORS And all around lying none but dead and dying,

and phantoms sadly crying!

NEKROTZAR & PIET With one great trumpet call I'll bring the world's downfall!

NEKROTZAR That will end it all!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS What will come of us all?

NEKROTZAR The world set on fire!

NEKROTZAR & PIET Now is the terror dire!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS For we shall expire!

NEKROTZAR Doom now draws near,

for the world will disappear!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS Where art thou, our saviour?

NEKROTZAR 'Round us a sea of flames.

NEKROTZAR, PIET

& ASTRADAMORS No living thing remains!

WOMEN'S CHORUS off-stage

Ever more silence reigns!

Nekrotzar forces the stooping Piet to the ground and mounts him.

NEKROTZAR On, my companions, to the city!

To the royal palace!

The farce is almost over now! Forward, my fiery steed, ho-hi! Let's hear your final view – ballyhoo!

PIET Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Piet breaks into a trot. All three leave the stage. Astradamors comes back and throws everything he can find into a wild heap.

ASTRADAMORS At last I am master in my own house!

### **SCENE THREE**

Doorbell Prelude



WHITE MINISTER Ass-licker, ass-crawler! Blackmailer, bloodsucker! BLACK MINISTER Charlatan, clodhopper! WHITE MINISTER Driveller, dodderer! BLACK MINISTER Exorcist, egotist! WHITE MINISTER Fraudulent flatterer! BLACK MINISTER Gigolo, guttersnipe! WHITE MINISTER **BLACK MINISTER** Hooligan, humbugger! 1...1... WHITE MINISTER Ha, can't think of anything with "I." Ha, can't think of anything with "J." **BLACK MINISTER** Kidnapper! Kiss-my-ass! WHITE MINISTER BLACK MINISTER Layabout! WHITE MINISTER Lickspittle! Muckraker! Mealy-mouth! BLACK MINISTER Nancy-boy! WHITE MINISTER BLACK MINISTER Nincompoop!

BLACK MINISTER

O! O! O! Off with you! WHITE MINISTER boxes Black on the ears

O! O! O! Out you go!

boxes White on the ears

Pederast!

Piddlepants! WHITE MINISTER Pimply ponce! **BLACK MINISTER** Poxy pimp! WHITE MINISTER

**BLACK MINISTER** Racketeer, ruffian, ravishing runt!

Scallywag, scrimshanker, swashbuckling WHITE MINISTER

swine!

BLACK MINISTER Sodomite!

Shit hunter! WHITE MINISTER

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER Tweedledum!

BLACK MINISTER U ... u ... u ch!

Underdog!

WHITE MINISTER V ... v ... v ch!

Vagabond!

boxes Black on the ears

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER X! Y! Z!

The White Minister unrolls a White document with Black lettering and gesticulates wildly with it under the Black Minister's nose.

WHITE MINISTER Here, Black party skunk, my resignation!

The Black Minister unrolls a Black document with White lettering and gesticulates with it under the White Minister's nose.

BLACK MINISTER Here, White party polecat, my resignation!

PRINCE GO-GO appears in front of the curtain

Gentlemen, I beg you!

You should put the interests of the nation ...

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER ... above mere selfish egoism?

Prince Go-Go, if you insist! Appeasement, appeasement!

go-go Yes!

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER All right, then, Highness, the riding lesson!

Through a gap in the curtain an oversized rocking-horse can be seen.

Mount your steed!

The two Ministers lift Prince Go-Go by force on to the rocking-horse.

Gee up!

They rock him violently.

go-go We're feeling giddy!

WHITE MINISTER Gallop!

But keep the reins loose!

BLACK MINISTER Now keep the reins tight!

WHITE MINISTER Cavalry charge ...

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER ... as in war!

go-go Never war!

Stop it! We surrender!

falls from the horse

WHITE MINISTER What, again?

BLACK MINISTER Thus do dynasties fall ...

go-go We make a protest!

It's laid down in our constitution ...

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER Constitution?

WHITE MINISTER Ha, ha ...

He brings out a large sheet of paper, crumples the paper and passes it on to the Black Minister.

BLACK MINISTER Paper!

Ha, ha ...

He tears up the piece of paper and scatters the fragments in all directions.

go-go Enough! Enough! Enough!

Forgive me! I beg your pardon!

BLACK MINISTER Posture exercises!

WHITE MINISTER Get moving, Your Highness!

go-go Ow! Ow! Ow!

BLACK MINISTER How to wear a crown with dignity!

The two Ministers forcibly place a heavy, oversized crown on Prince Go-Go's head. Go-Go staggers and almost collapses under the weight of the crown.

WHITE MINISTER Hee-hee, they're heavy,

these crowns, hee-hee ... ?

go-go It hurts!

I won't wear a crown!

I won't wear it! Never! Never!

BLACK MINISTER Your Highness abdicates?

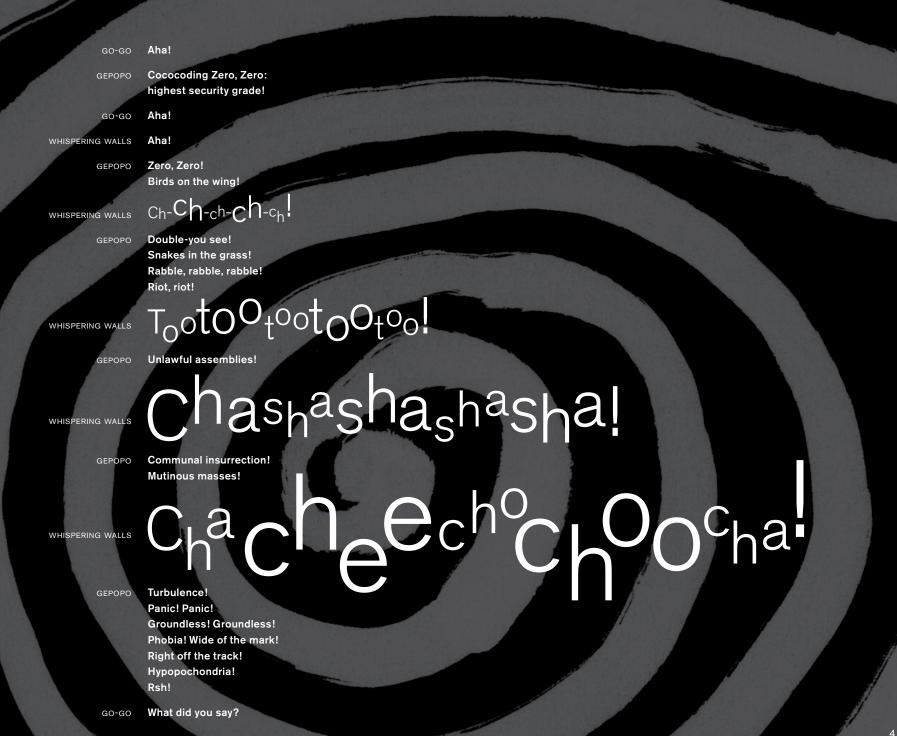
go-go No! No!

WHITE MINISTER Then stand to attention!

BLACK MINISTER Chest out!



WHITE MINISTER	Stomach in!	WHITE MINISTER & BLACK MINISTER	At once, Highness!
BLACK MINISTER	Out!	The curtain opens. Splendid throne room; at the back, a balcony opens out.	
WHITE MINISTER	In! Out!	In front of the throne stands a richly laden table.	
BLACK MINISTER	In! Out!	GO-GO	Ah, wonder!
WHITE MINISTER	In!		Thirst! Hunger! Glasses, dishes!
BLACK MINISTER	punches Go-Go		Succulent dishes!
	In!	The two Ministers hold Go-Go still and do not let him eat.	
WHITE MINISTER	punches Go-Go	BLACK MINISTER	Now then, Highness!
	Out!	WHITE MINISTER	Not so greedy, Highness!
GO-GO	Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!	BLACK MINISTER	produces a Black scroll
BLACK MINISTER	produces a Black scroll with White lettering		First sign this decree!
	Now memorize this speech!	GO-GO	What is that?
WHITE MINISTER	produces a White scroll with Black lettering	BLACK MINISTER	Well, a hm
	My speech – here! Black on White!		A decree raising the value-added tax by one hundred-and-only percent.
BLACK MINISTER	White on Black!	GO-GO	Not one cent! Your tax, say I, is much too high!
WHITE MINISTER	On White, Black!	WHITE MINISTER &	
BLACK MINISTER	On Black, White!	BLACK MINISTER	Highness! I shall resign!
WHITE MINISTER	Black!	GO-GO	First my dinner.
BLACK MINISTER	White!		gorges himself as if he were starving
WHITE MINISTER	Ass!	And, what is more, I accept your resignation.	
BLACK MINISTER	Bum!	Swift entrance of the Gepopo Chief's attendants: hangmen, detectives, agents, etc.	
WHITE MINISTER	Resignation!	WHISPERING WALLS	Tsk-tsk! etc.
BLACK MINISTER	Resignation!	Mysterious entrance of the Ge	Psssst!
GO-GO	Gentleman, I beg you!	GO-GO	Ha! Head of my secret service! What a pleasure!
	Our dear nation	go-go	You turn up just at the proper time!
BLACK MINISTER	Forgive me!		Well, what new intelligence message do you bring us now?
WHITE MINISTER	Forgive me!	GEPOPO	Psst! etc.
WHITE MINISTER &	Forgive mel		
BLACK MINISTER	Forgive me!	WHISPERING WALLS	Psst! etc.
GO-GO	Yes! I am hungry!	GEPOPO	Shsht! Co cocoding zero! Ah!



GEPOPO Rsh! March!

March target! Direction! Prince! Your palace!

March target royal palace!

Palace!

Password: Go-Go-lash! Demonstrations, ha! Protest actions, ha! Provocations, ha!

Pst! Pst!

Much discretion! Close observation! Take precautions!

pulls out a revolver

That's all.
Pst! Pst!
Not a squeak!
Confidential!
One more thing:
bear in mind:
silence is golden!

exits with his followers

Both Ministers run toward the balcony. The Black Minister, with his back turned to the audience, addresses the – imaginary – people. The people interrupt him with shouts, boos, and whistles. He is pelted with eggs, tomatoes, shoes, and other objects and falls injured to the ground.

GO-GO Ha ha! Bravo!
Ha ha ha! Bravissimo!

The White Minister pushes the prostrate Black Minister aside with his foot. The people interrupt the White Minister with shouts, boos, and whistles. He is pelted with eggs, tomatoes, shoes, and other objects and falls injured to the ground.

Bravissimo!
Ha ha ha!
Ha ha ha ha ha!
You nincompoops!
Silly asses!
Hoddydoddies!

THE PEOPLE OF BREUGHELLAND (I)

Our great leader!
Our great leader!
Our great leader!
The people's friend!

go-go Come, now let me do it!

THE PEOPLE OF

BREUGHELLAND (I) Our great leader!

Our great leader! etc.

Go-Go, on the balcony, receives the acclaim of the people. Then he talks to the people. His voice remains inaudible; only his gestures can be seen.

> Go-Go! Go-Go! etc.

go-go So! We have spoken!

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER Oh! What an imperious monarch!

Such a Hercules!

go-go My good gentlemen,

I rule here!

WHITE MINISTER

& BLACK MINISTER | I shall resign!

go-go To hell with your resignations!

You will stay!

The hangmen, detectives, and agents snoop around.
The Gepopo Chief appears disguised as a huge, ugly spider.

GEPOPO Ah!

go-go What is it now?

GEPOPO Secret cipher!

Code-name: Loch Ness monster.

Comet in sight!

Red glow! Burns bright! Pst! Sit tight! No fright!

Yes! No! No! Yes! No! No! Yes! Yes! No!

Beyond all doubt: Satellite! Asteroid! Planetoid! Polaroid!

Coming fast! Hostile! Perfidious! Menacing! Momentous! Fatal!

Stern measures!

GEPOPO & GO-GO Stern measures?

Stern measures!

GEPOPO Stern measures!

Stern measures?

Stern measures?

Stern measures!

GO-GO hurries over to the Ministers

Hey! Hey, wake up!

It's morning!

Stern measures!

You must take measures!

WHITE MINISTER & BLACK MINISTER

Stern measures?

How come? Against what?

Several detectives disappear and return straightaway with a dispatch. It is passed pedantically from hand to hand and eventually handed over to the Gepopo Chief.

Comet? A vision! Red light? Make believe! Planet? Illusion!

WHITE MINISTER Planetoid?

WHITE MINISTER &

BLACK MINISTER And we?

We go! We'll vamoose!

Ciao, Prince! And good night!

go-go At last I am alone!

Now I am master in my own house!

Where, where art thou,

legendary might, hallmark of Go-Gos!

The hangmen and detectives present the Gepopo Chief with another dispatch. He reads it.

THE PEOPLE OF BREUGHELLAND (I)

Mixed chorus, off-stage

Hear us, Prince, oh, hear us! Dread and fright do sear us! Great our alarm, yet fear no harm

if thou be ever near us!

GEPOPO K<sup>u</sup>Kuriku! Kik<sup>e</sup>rik<sup>i</sup>!

He's coming!

GO-GO Who's coming?

GEPOPO Coming!

BLACK MINISTER Just a mirage!

WHITE MINISTER Asteroid?

BLACK MINISTER Your imagination!

WHITE MINISTER Satellite?

WHITE MINISTER & BLACK MINISTER

Hallucination!

**Сыр** ... **кр** ... **е**tс.

go-go Kh what?

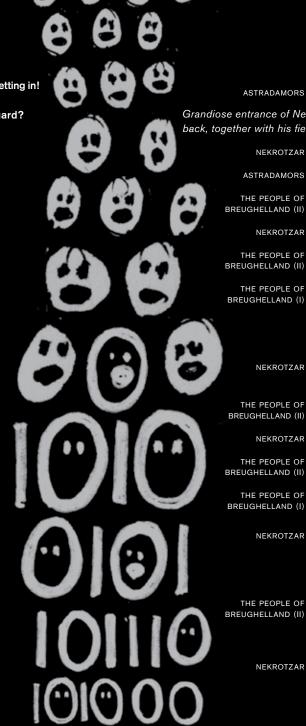
GEPOPO Ca ... catastrophe!

He's coming!

Kekerikeke!
Kokorikoko!
Kukurikuku!
Kakarikaka Kakarikaka!
Makabrikaka!
Makabrika!
Makabrika!
Brikamaka!
Brikamaka!
Makabri!
Makabri!

What is this Macabre? GO-GO Coming! Coming! GEPOPO Look there! There! There! He's getting in! He's getting in! He's getting in! He's in! Where's the guard? Where's the guard? The guard! The guard! The guard! Call the guard! Call the gua'! Call 'e gua'! Call guard-a! Da! etc. The Gepopo Chief and his attendants flee in panic. Instead of the expected disaster, Astradamors suddenly storms on to the stage. ASTRADAMORS Hurray, hurray! My wife is dead, hurray! GO-GO Hurray, hurray! My two Ministers have fled! My Prince! ASTRADAMORS My worthy sage! GO-GO Huzza, huzza! GO-GO & ASTRADAMORS For all is now in order! Huzza! Huzzarazazaza! THE PEOPLE OF Mixed chorus in the stalls BREUGHELLAND (II) Oh! Prince! Hear us! But tell me, my good friend, I pray: GO-GO what is this cloak you wear today? ASTRADAMORS A funeral kind of mantilla, ready for the Dies illa! THE PEOPLE OF Prince! Hear what we say! BREUGHELLAND (II) Quiet down there! GO-GO THE PEOPLE OF BREUGHELLAND (II) Prince! Help us! Please save us! Yes, yes, I'm coming ... GO-GO

What do you want, dear people?

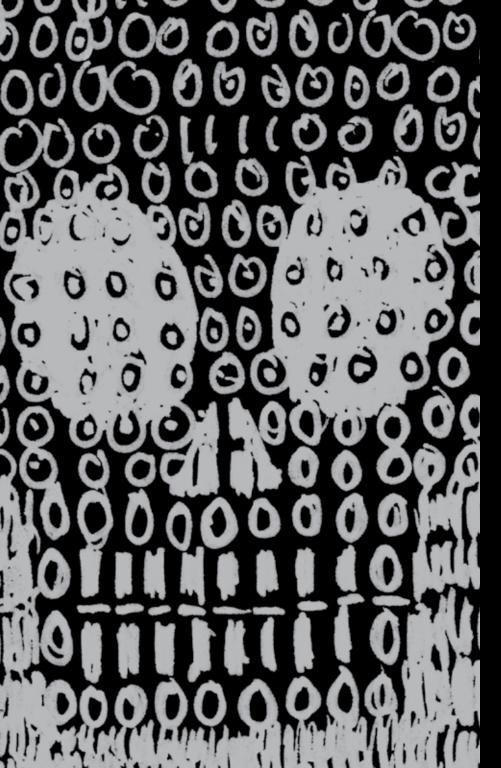


Wailing siren; Prince Go-Go is completely intimidated; clings to Astradamors. Help! Help me! Save me! ASTRADAMORS Under the table, quick, and not a sound! Grandiose entrance of Nekrotzar with scythe and trumpet, riding on Piet's back, together with his fiendish entourage. Woe! Ooh! NEKROTZAR Woe! Ooh! ASTRADAMORS THE PEOPLE OF Hear us! NEKROTZAR For the day of wrath and retribution has come! THE PEOPLE OF Woe! THE PEOPLE OF Hear us, Prince, oh, hear us! BREUGHELLAND (I) Dread and fright do sear us! Great our alarm, yet fear no harm, if thou be ever near us! And he who speaks to you now, NEKROTZAR he wields a mighty two-edged sword! THE PEOPLE OF Woe! BREUGHELLAND (II) And brings slaughter! NEKROTZAR THE PEOPLE OF Woe! Woe! Woe! THE PEOPLE OF Hear us, Prince, oh, hear us! And seven angels with seven bright trumpets, they will sound their trumpets! He who has ears to hear, let him hear,

BREUGHELLAND (I) NEKROTZAR for the hour of doom is upon him! THE PEOPLE OF

O, mighty Macabre! BREUGHELLAND (II) Have pity! Strike us not dead!

> NEKROTZAR Now will searing, scorching heat glow and burn as from a thousand suns. and the waters of the oceans turn into vapor,



and loudly the mountains split asunder, and the air will blaze like the burning of gas, and the bodies of men will be singed, and all will be turned into charred corpses and shrink like shriveled heads!

THE PEOPLE OF BREUGHELLAND (II)

But me, me, me, let me go on living; pity take on me, me, me! No, me, me, just me! Punish all the rest, but not me, me, me; do not kill me! Not me! Not me!

**ASTRADAMORS** 

There's no need to fear:
there is still some time to spare ...
Oh, turn your gaze here, macabre knight!
Here on this table — what a sight!
Gives one, oh, such an appetite!
Tell me, would you not like to try it?

Long, yea, does the road to heaven wind, and soon the world will be left behind.
So let us, while we can, feast here in this right royal-looking restaurant.
But before we start to dine,
I recommend this drop of wine!
I've lived on this my whole life through, so drink deep,
before you do what you must do!
And when your trumpet signals the last tattoo ...

ASTRADAMORS Tra-tra!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS ... we'll set forth gaily, gaily, with too-ra-loo!

Fa-la ...!

Hey, Brother Nekro, ...

Piet gives Nekrotzar a glass of wine.

ASTRADAMORS raises his glass to Nekrotzar, who does not notice it

... why so full of gloom?

Here for you too a lovely glass of wine!

From under the table Prince Go-Go puts out a hand, and Astradamors discreetly gives him a glass of wine.

				v
PIET & ASTRADAMORS	It will put some strength in your spine!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Your
	And then you won't feel such a swine		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	when you dispatch us to doomsday! Fa-la !		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	health!
	i a-ia :		NEKROTZAR	Up!
PIET	Here's to our successful passing on!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!
	Cheers!		NEKROTZAR	Up!
ASTRADAMORS	Your jubilant extinction! Cheers!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!
			NEKROTZAR	Up!
PIET	And to a happy kicking the bucket!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Till
	Cheers!	Mr.	NEKROTZAR	Up!
ASTRADAMORS	A felicitus exitus letalis! Cheers!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	you
			NEKROTZAR	Up!
PIET & ASTRADAMORS	To our great and singular macabre colleague		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	are
	Nekro, alias Tsar,		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	the inexorable reaper-man!  Ha ha ha ha! Cheers! Cheers! Cheers!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	tight!
	Our Nekro is no Tsar!		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	He's just an old wet fart!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!
	He may be singular,		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	perhaps a bit bizarre,		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Cheers!
	but he can't scare us, bah!		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	No danger near or far!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!
	And we feel fine, hurrah!		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	Hey, Nekrotzar, you ass-hole!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Prost!
	To arms now! Rise!		NEKROTZAR	Up!
NEKROTZAR	Time to set to work on my holy task!	1 (	PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!
	But first let me sip this chalice	<i>k k</i>	NEKROTZAR	Up!
	fill'd with human blood!		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Skål!
	And may the pressed-out juices of my victims		NEKROTZAR	Up!
	serve to strengthen and sustain me		PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!
	before, alas, my necessary deed begins!	-	NEWDOTTAD DIET	
	Up!		NEKROTZAR, PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Up! Up! Up! Up! Up! etc.
		11	& ASTRADAMORS	op: op: op: op: op: op: op:
PIET & ASTRADAMORS	fill Nekrotzar's glass again	11	NEKROTZAR	Blood tastes good!
	He drinks! Hurrah!	- 11	PIET & ASTRADAMORS	No! It's wine!
	Cheers, Nekro!	1/ //	NEKROTZAR	Blood tastes good! etc.
	Bottoms up!	// //		
NEKROTZAR	Up!	W/ 11		Hmmm! It's delicious! Fabulous! Wonderful!
PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!	. // //		Am old and weak, am old and weak.
NEKROTZAR	Up!			But, ah! This gives me strength!  Hey! Now what the devil?
PIET & ASTRADAMORS	Drink!			Fill up!
NEKROTZAR	Up!			More there! Again! Again!

More there! More there! Ah, yes ... What was I saying? Ah! ... I'm weak and old ... My flesh is cold, so cold! So much have I destroyed, the world so oft made void! Sodom, Gomorrah rent! The great deluge sent! Have cast down the Tower of Babel! Put paid to Adam and Eve, and their sons Cain and Abel! Demolished great kings and queens in scores, no one could escape my claws! Socrates a poisoned chalice! Nero, a knife in his palace! Hangman, cutthroat, pois'ner, sniper, to Cleopatra I gave the viper ... Ha! Viper? Dragon? Sphinx? Harlots and witches and furies like Megaera! With all their instruments of terror, ah! What? Whips and spiders, spits and sighs? You won't be in Paradise!

PIET & ASTRADAMORS

Whips and spiders, spits and sighs? She'll not be in Paradise! The horrible tools of terror, ah!

The witches, the furies, Megaera!

PIET, NEKROTZAR & ASTRADAMORS

Ah! ...
all the witches, dragons, sphinxes,
furies, harlots, kings and queens and
generals and presidents and cruel dictators. ...

PIET ... even impresarios ...

NEKROTZAR ... all who have my patience tried ...

PIET & ASTRADAMORS ... all who have his patience tried ...

NEKROTZAR ... I have simply swept aside ...

PIET & ASTRADAMORS ... he has swept aside!

NEKROTZAR ... Caligula!

Theoderich!
Genghis Khan!
Ivan the Terrible!
Napole-poleon Bonaparte!

Nekrotzar stumbles drunkenly, so heavily that he tumbles on to the diningtable, pulling off the tablecloth and suddenly revealing Go-Go under the table.

NEKROTZAR **Hey!...** 

Are you Genghis Khan? or Tsar Ivan the Terrr ... ?

ASTRADAMORS May I introduce?

Tsar Nekro ... Tsar Go-Go ...

NEKROTZAR I Tsar, you Tsar, he Tsar!

GO-GO, PIET, NEKROTZAR

& ASTRADAMORS I Tsar, you Tsar, he Tsar, we Tsar!
Who Tsar? We Tsar! Bizarre! Bizarre!

A sudden explosion with dramatic lighting effects. A lot of noise off-stage, screams, then earthquake.

NEKROTZAR Where am I? What's the time?

PIET The time:

takes a large hourglass out of his pocket

Two and tuppence to midnight ...

Now out with it: do we live, or do we die?

NEKROTZAR Fill up! Cheers! Bottoms up!

suddenly greatly alarmed

How late is it?

PIET The time:

pulls out a huge kitchen clock
Umpteen seconds to midnight ...

Extremely bright lighting effects. Suddenly, complete silence. There is a pale, dim lighting; the earthquake has ceased.

go-go Adieu, Breughelland!

NEKROTZAR What did you say?

PIET At the tone the time will be ...

NEKROTZAR Where is my scythe?

My trumpet? My horse?
Quickly! Make haste!
Ah! ... Too late! ...

to Go-Go

Help! Help me!

GO-GO to Astradamors
Help! Help him!

ASTRADAMORS to Piet

Help! Help him!

PIET to Go-Go

Help! Help him!

NEKROTZAR Help! Help me!

Scythe! Trumpet!

Go-Go, Piet & Astradamors quickly bring the scythe, the trumpet, etc., to him.

Horse! My horse!

GO-GO, PIET & ASTRADAMORS Your horse!

Prince Go-Go, Piet & Astradamors, fully drunk, carry Nekrotzar with great difficulty to the rocking-horse and seat him on it.

NEKROTZAR The command comes from on high that sun,

moon, and stars

shall now be extinguished!

Sun and moon are extinguished; the comet glows increasingly brighter in contrast.

Hail and fire and sulphur mixed with blood

shall rain down on the earth,

and a huge blazing mountain shall fall into the sea,

and the sea be filled with blood!

Hear the mighty voice of heaven,

which commands that time at once shall cease!

Time stands still ...

for what now reigns is eternity, nothingness, and the great, all-pervading, all-embracing void!

And I see what I have seen: midnight strikes —

The cruelest, most terrible of all midnights,

for it is the last!

In the name of the Almighty,

I now smite the world to pieces!

Suddenly semi-darkness: pale, celestial light.

Yes, it is done! Is done!

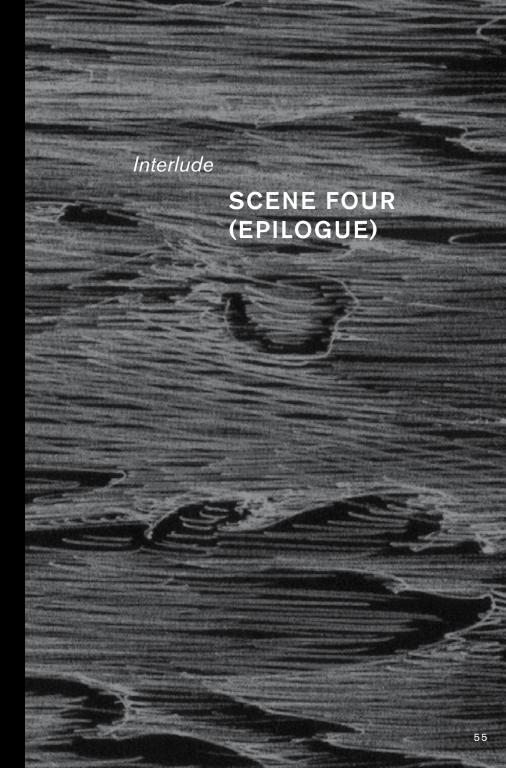
All is done! ...

Gradually it becomes completely dark. Nekrotzar falls drunkenly from the horse.

WOMEN'S CHORUS off-stage

on stage

Consummatum est.



In the lovely country of Breugelland. Piet and Astradamors are floating freely above the ground; they are dreaming that they are in heaven.

PIET Ghost Astradamors, are you dead?

ASTRADAMORS Yes.

PIET Am I dead too?

ASTRADAMORS Yes, ghost Piet.

PIET Since when?

ASTRADAMORS Since midnight last.

PIET Sincerest condolences!

ASTRADAMORS Thank you, likewise!

PIET See? We're floating to Paradise:

ASTRADAMORS We're floating higher ...

PIET Yes, now I can hear those heav'nly harps ...

ASTRADAMORS ... higher, higher ...

I'm growing wings.

PIET Me, too!

GO-GO off-stage

Hallo!

somewhat nearer

Hallo!

PIET I hear a call!

go-go Hallo!

PIET Come! We're gliding ...

PIET & ASTRADAMORS ... upwards into the sky-blue infinity!

They float away out of sight.

GO-GO still off-stage

Hallo! Hallooo! Hallo, Breughelland!

Prince Go-Go appears on stage.

Is no one there?
Anyone there?
Are they all dead?

All of them, every single one dead? Only me alive? I alone? Forgotten? Ruffiack, Schobiack and Schabernack appear.

RUFFIACK, SCHOBIACK

& SCHABERNACK Ha, we are three soldiers,

risen from the grave, sharing all the booty which the good God gave!

RUFFIACK Halt! A civilian!

go-go Oh, but no, gentleman all,

we are Prince Go-Go, the people's friend,

your sov'reign!

SCHOBIACK Bah! The Prince is dead!

SCHABERNACK You're dead, too, baby! Understand?

go-go You may call me "baby" if you want to.

At times like this we all should be good

comrades, right?

We'll give you high decorations, silver and gold,

and relieve you of the official duti -

At this point one of the ruffians takes Prince Go-Go by the throat.

Nekrotzar appears suddenly: he was lying under the loot in the cart.

NEKROTZAR Shit! Your highness still alive?

Have I not just laid to waste the entire

goddamned world?

My scythe! My trumpet! Horse! Comet!

go-go Later, my friend ...

suddenly addressing the three ruffians

And you! Attention! Stomach in, chest out!

Ruffiack, Schobiack, and Schabernack follow obediently

to Nekrotzar

Tell me now: who are you?

NEKROTZAR Which ...

where is my grave?

MESCALINA Ashtaroth!

NEKROTZAR Oh, hell!

Mescalina wildly pursues Nekrotzar, who flees from her.

MESCALINA Behemoth!

NEKROTZAR Damnation!

MESCALINA The vampire!

NEKROTZAR So help me!

MESCALINA Satanas!

NEKROTZAR Help me!

MESCALINA Beelzebub!

NEKROTZAR Oh, save me!

Mescalina has caught Nekrotzar; she holds him firmly and is about to plunge the spit into his chest.

GO-GO You there! Seize hold of that fury!

The three ruffians suddenly fling themselves on Mescalina.

to Schabernack

Hey you!

You run and fetch a rope!

MESCALINA continues to be held by Ruffiack and Schobiack

Hades, Orcus, Tartarus!

Him! Him!

My husband once!

Pfui! Pfui!

NEKROTZAR Whips and stakes and spiders, lances,

the devilish harpy!

Schabernack reappears. He is dragging behind him the two Ministers, tied up with a long rope.

**BLACK MINISTER &** 

WHITE MINISTER Innocuous! Virtuous! Decorous!

Altruist! Humanist! Humanitarian!

Mercy!

MESCALINA Highness! These I know too!

And am ready to expose them!

WHITE MINISTER Highness, it was she who thought up those

infamous taxes!

MESCALINA Oh, ho, sweetheart, and who was it

wanted to overthrow the Prince?

BLACK MINISTER Highness, the Inquisition was her idea!

MESCALINA Oh, ho, dearie, and who wanted to be a tyrant

and -

WHITE MINISTER Who invented mass graves?

MESCALINA Who invented ... ?

WHITE MINISTER Yes, and who invented ...?

MESCALINA, BLACK MINISTER

& WHITE MINISTER Who?

MESCALINA He! You! They!

WHITE MINISTER She! You! They!

BLACK MINISTER You! She! They!

Mescalina with an artful blow frees herself from Ruffiack and Schobiack.

She hurls herself on the two Ministers. A scuffle ensues.

go-go Soldiers! Do your stuff!

The ruffians set about massacring Mescalina, the two Ministers, and Prince Go-Go. All participants in the struggle suddenly fall to the ground and lie there motionless. Piet & Astradamors walk in unsuspectingly. Prince Go-Go jumps up.

Ah, welcome, comrades!

ASTRADAMORS Your Highness!

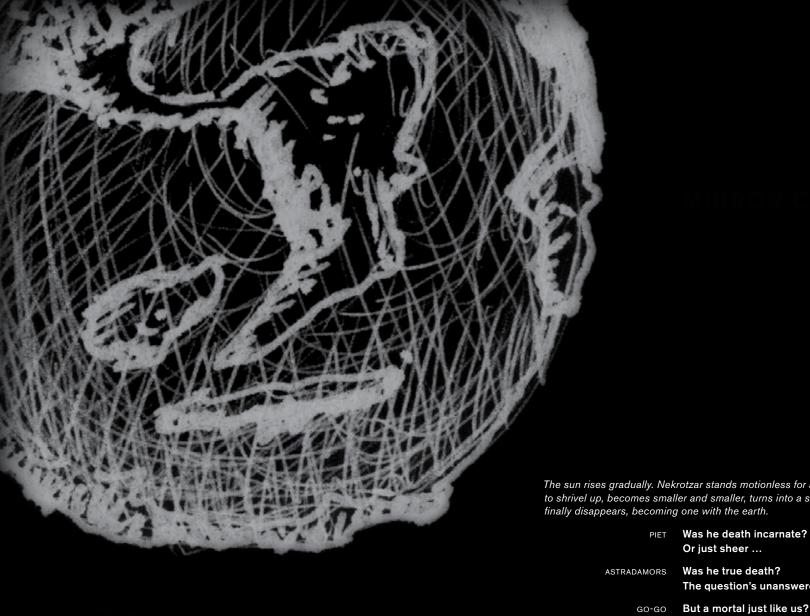
PIET Are you all dead, like us?

Go-Go produces three bottles and gives a bottle each to Piet and Astradamors.

go-go Here, brothers, drink!

GO-GO, PIET & ASTRADAMORS We have a thirst, so we are living ...

NEKROTZAR So ... you are living ...



The sun rises gradually. Nekrotzar stands motionless for a while, then begins to shrivel up, becomes smaller and smaller, turns into a sort of sphere and

The question's unanswered.

But a mortal just like us?

Yes? PIET

What is asked remains unanswered.

GO-GO, PIET & ASTRADAMORS Let's start up boozing all over ...

While Go-Go, Piet and Astradamors drink, erotic sounds can be heard from the tomb. Then the door of the tomb suddenly flies open. Amanda and Amando emerge from the tomb, closely entwined.

AMANDA AMANDO AMANDA FINALE: AMANDA **PASSACAGLIA** AMANDA & AMANDO just here and now! GO-GO & MESCALINA ... just here and now! AMANDA & AMANDO ALL SINGERS

Ah, it was good in that dark grave, alone with thee, my dear, sweet knave! Ah, sweetest maid, what priceless wealth one finds in doing good by stealth! Good, not a soul could hear us moan! That grave, there we were quite alone. How many people disapprove when one enjoys the joys of love! How pitiful were their fears

when the world collapsed about their ears!

For us too the world ceased to be, and yet how ecstatic were we!

> What do we care for storm and flood, when fire is coursing through our blood? Let others fear the Judgement Day: we have no fears, let come what may! 'Neath terrors dire let others bow: for us there's only here and now,

For life grants most to those who give, and who gives love shall loving live. When one does this, then time and tide stand still: now and for evermore.

Fear not to die, good people all! No one knows when his hour will fall! And when it comes, then let it be ... Farewell, till then in cheerfulness! Farewell, farewell, farewell.

## Le Grand Macabre

### by György Ligeti

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